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Check Your HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE PREVENTION I.Q.

Prepared by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute • NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Test your knowledge of high blood pressure with the following questions. Circle each true or false. The answers are given on the back of this sheet:

1. There is nothing you can do to prevent high blood pressure. T F
2. If your mother or father has high blood pressure, you'll get it. T F
3. Young adults don't get high blood pressure. T F
4. High blood pressure has no symptoms. T F
5. Stress causes high blood pressure. T F
6. High blood pressure is not life-threatening. T F
7. Blood pressure is high when it's at or over 140/90 mm Hg. T F
8. If you're overweight, you are two to six times more likely to develop high blood pressure. T F
9. You have to exercise vigorously every day to improve your blood pressure and heart health. T F
10. Americans eat two to three times more salt and sodium than they need. T F
11. Drinking alcohol lowers blood pressure. T F
12. High blood pressure has no cure. T F

How well did you do? ▶

Answers to the High Blood Pressure Prevention I.Q. Quiz

1. FALSE. High blood pressure can be prevented with faur steps: keep a healthy weight; became physically active; limit yaur solt ond sodium use; ond, if you drink alcahalic beverages, da sa in maderatian.

2. FALSE. You are mare likely ta get high blaad pressure if it runs in yaur fomily, but that daesn't mean you must get it. Yaur chance af getting high bload pressure is olso greoter if you're older or on Africon Americon. But high blood pressure is NOT an inevitable port of aging and everyane can take steps ta prevent the disease—the steps are given in answer 1.

3. FALSE. About 15 percent of those oges 18-39 ore omong the 50 millian Americans with high blaad pressure. Once you have high blaad pressure, you hove it for the rest af yaur life. Sa start naw to prevent it.

4. TRUE. High blood pressure, or "hypertension," usuolly hos no symptoms. In fact, it is often called the "silent killer." Yau can hove high blood pressure ond feel fine. Thot's why it's impartant to have yaur blaad pressure checked—it's a simple test.

5. FALSE. Stress daes make blood pressure go up, but anly temporority. Ups ond dawns in blaad pressure ore narmal. Run far a bus ond your pressure rises; sleep and it draps. Blood pressure is the farce af blaad against the walls af arteries. Blood pressure becames dangerous when it's olways high. Thot horms your heort ond blaad vessels. Sa what daes couse high blood pressure? In the vast majarity of coses, o single cause is never found.

6. FALSE. High blood pressure is the moin cause af stroke and a factar in the development af heart diseose and kidney foilure.

7. TRUE. But even blood pressures slightly under 140/90 mm Hg con increase yaur risk af heart disease ar strake.

8. TRUE. As weight increases, so daes blaad pressure. It's impartant ta stay at a healthy weight. If yau need ta reduce, try ta lase 1/2 ta 1 pound a week. Choose foods law in fot (especially saturoted fat), since fat is high in calories. Even if you're at a good weight, the healthiest way ta eat is low fot, law chalesteral.

9. FALSE. Studies show thot even o little physical activity helps prevent high blood pressure and strengthens your heort. Even omong the overweight, thase wha are active have lawer blaad pressures than thase who oren't. It's best ta da some octivity for 30 minutes, most days. Walk, garden, ar bawl. If yau don't have o 30-minute periad, do samething far 15 minutes, twice a day. Every bit helps—sa make activity port of your daily routine.

10. TRUE. Americans eat way too much solt ond sadium. And same peaple, such as many African Americons, are especially sensitive ta salt. Salt is made af sodium and chlaride, and it's mostly the sodium that affects bload pressure. Solt is only ane farm of sodium—there are athers. Sa yau need to wotch yaur use af bath salt ond sodium. That includes what's added to foods at the table ond in cooking, and what's already in processed faads and snacks. Americons, especially people with high blood pressure, shauld eot no more than abaut 6 groms of solt a doy, which equols about 2,400 milligroms of sadium.

11. FALSE. Drinking too much alcohal can roise blood pressure. If you drink, have na mare thon two drinks a day. The "Dietary Guidelines" recommend that for overall health, women should limit their olcohol ta na mare thon one drink a day. A drink would be 1.5 ounces of 80 proof whiskey, ar 5 aunces af wine, ar 12 ounces af beer.

12. TRUE. But high blaad pressure con be treoted ond controlled. Treatment usuolly includes lifestyle changes—lasing weight, if overweight; becoming physically octive; limiting solt and sadium; ond ovoiding drinking excess alcahal—and, if needed, medication. But the best woy ta ovoid the dangers of high blaad pressure is ta prevent the condition.

For more information on high blood pressure, call 1-800-575-WELL, or write to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Information Center, P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105.

National High Blood Pressure Education Program
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